

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SMS-01 HA-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01
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-----031489 181606Z /47

O R 181450Z AUG 78
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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USBERLIN
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2217

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CZ
SUBJECT: PRAGUE PRE-ANNIVERSARY CALM

1. SUMMARY: PRAGUE REMAINS QUIET AS AUGUST 1968 ANNIVERSARY IS UPON US. PROPAGANDA ABOUT THE ANNIVERSARY HAS DIED OFF IN FAVOR OF CLOYING REPETITION OF CSSR-SOVIET BROTHERHOOD THEME AND INTENSIFICATION OF ANTI-U.S., ANTI-WEST CAMPAIGN. DISSIDENTS ARE LYING LOW UNTIL END OF THE MONTH, AFTER ISSUING ANNIVERSARY STATEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

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2. AS WE MOVE INTO THE LAST FEW DAYS BEFORE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW PACT INTERVENTION, ATMOSPHERE IN PRAGUE IS DECIDEDLY CALM THOUGH POLICE SURVEILLANCE HAS NOTICABLY STRENGTHENED. PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN PROCLAIMING GRATITUDE FOR FRATERNAL ACTION TO SAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM COUNTERREVOLUTION AND ABSORPTION BY THE WEST APPARENTLY CLIMAXED WITH REPRINTING IN

LOCAL PRESS AUGUST 12 OF VASIL BILAK'S ARTICLE IN SOVIET NOVOYE VREMYA "TRUTH AGAINST LIES", GIVING HIS VERSION OF 1968 EVENTS. THIS CAMPAIGN PROVIDES JUSTIFICATION FOR HEIGHTENED POLICE EFFORTS TO BE READY FOR ANY CONTINGENCY. IN LAST FEW DAYS, HOWEVER, MEDIA HAVE BEEN MAINLY PREOCCUPIED WITH NEW PRAGUE SUBWAY LINE AND THIS YEAR'S HARVEST, BUT EVEN HERE COOPERATION WITH SOVIETS IS UNDERSCORED. EVEN ASSOCIATED CAMPAIGN ALLEGING GREAT ECONOMIC GAINS MADE SINCE 1969 WHEN SIK ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM WAS ABOLISHED HAS TAPERED OFF.

3. THEME OF INTIMATE COOPERATION WITH SOVIETS, ON THE OTHER HAND, CONTINUES TO BE PLAYED INTENSELY. OPENING OF NEW SUBWAY LINE WITH ACCOMPANYING EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN BREZHNEV AND THE PRAGUE SUBWAY BUILDERS HAS PROVIDED NEW SOURCE OF MATERIAL ON THIS COOPERATION WHICH IS ALSO EMPHASIZED BY THE CURRENTLY HEAVY FLOW OF SOVIET OFFICIAL VISITORS. THIS IS NORMAL AUGUST PHENOMENON AND MOST OFFICIALS ARE IN ECONOMIC OR TECHNOLOGICAL FIELDS, BUT SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL CURRENTLY IN PRAGUE IS DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER IGOR ZEMSKOV, WHO CALLED ON FONMIN CHNOUPEK AUGUST 16. VISIT HERE OF COSMONAUTS GRECHKO AND ROMANENKO HAS ALSO RECEIVED PROMINENT ATTENTION. TIME IS ABOUT RIPE FOR USUAL MUCH-PUBLICIZED EXCHANGES OF VISITS BETWEEN SLOVAK AND UKRAINIAN COLLECTIVE FARMERS CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF HARVEST. NEVERTHE-
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LESS, SPIRIT OF SVEJK CONTINUES TO OPERATE - WHENEVER PROBLEMS OF MAINTENANCE OF FARM MACHINERY AND LACK OF SPARE PARTS ARE DISCUSSED IN MEDIA, SOVIET EQUIPMENT IS IN QUESTION.

4. ON DISSIDENT FRONT, WE UNDERSTAND CHARTER 77 STATEMENT MARKING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH AN APPEAL FOR WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS (EVANS/COSTOLANSKI CORRESPONDENCE DATED 7/27/78) AND THE CHARTER 77-POLISH ACTIVISTS' JOINT STATEMENT (PRAGUE 2096) HAVE APPEARED IN THE WEST. MEANWHILE, MOST PROMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HERE, INCLUDING THE THREE CHARTER LEADERS -- MESSRS. HEJDANEK AND SABATA AND MS. KUBISOVA -- ARE STAYING OUTSIDE OF PRAGUE TO AVOID DETENTION. THE POLICE CALLED IN MS. KUBISOVA ON AUGUST 15 AND PROMISED SHE COULD RESUME HER SINGING CAREER IF SHE RELINQUISHES A LEADING ROLE IN THE CHARTER MOVEMENT. SHE IS REPORTEDLY MULLING OVER THIS PROPOSAL BUT HAS NO INTENTION OF DISAVOWING HER SUPPORT FOR CHARTER 77 OBJECTIVES PER SE. HEJDANEK HAS BEEN ON VACATION IN SO. BOHEMIA BUT IS TO MEET WITH SABATA TOWARD THE END OF THIS WEEK. BOTH WILL REMAIN IN COUNTRYSIDE THROUGH THE ANNIVERSARY PERIOD AND, LIKE MOST OTHER ACTIVISTS, PLAN TO RESUME THEIR CHARTER

ACTIVITIES ONLY AFTER THE END OF THE MONTH.

5. PAVEL KOHOUT IS UNDER POLICE GUARD AT HIS COUNTRY HOUSE AS A RESULT OF A SECOND THREATENING LETTER AND THE POISONING OF HIS DOG, BUT POLICE ARE COURTEOUS AND NOT RESTRICTING HIS MOVEMENTS. WRITER IVAN KLIMA EARLIER RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN DETAINED BY POLICE, ACCORDING TO ARTIST KAREL HAVLICEK WHO TOLD US AUGUST 17 THAT HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH KLIMA. HAVLICEK AND TION MORAVEC (HUSBAND OF MS. KUBISOVA) TOLD US NUMEROUS YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE CONSIDERED AUGUST 21 BOYCOTTS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, WEARING BLACK ARM BANDS OR TIES AND SIMILAR SYMBOLIC ACTIONS REMINISCENT OF 1969 FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION. CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, THEY POINT OUT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL WOULD-BE ORGANIZERS ARE OUT OF THE CITY. THUS, THEY EXPECT A RATHER QUIET AUGUST 20-21, WITH PERHAPS SOME EXAMPLES OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE BUT NO CONFRONTATION OF SIGNIFICANCE WITH POLICE FORCES. BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, INDEPENDENCE, SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRAGUE02217
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780338-0550
Format: TEL
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780848/aaaabocu.tel
Line Count: 142
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 825ee360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1694345
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRAGUE PRE-ANNIVERSARY CALM
TAGS: PINT, PINR, CZ, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/825ee360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014